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A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

EARL OF ESSEX,

A GREAT FAVOURITE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH;

WITH

A Lamentable Ballad

ON HIS DEATH.

ROBT. DEVEREAUX, Earl of Essex, was in every respect qualified for a soldier, but the most unfit man in the world for a courtier. He was very young when his father died; and was not taken notice of till the year 1589, a twelvemonth after the destruction of the Armada, at which time he hired some ships, and bore Drake company in an expedition he was going upon. In 1591 he began to grow into favour, and was that year sent to the assistance of the King of France, with some forces under his command, and acquired much fame; so that, in 1597, he was sent admiral of an expedition into America. On his return he grew high in the queen's favour, and grew so insolent upon it as often to contradict her; but this never so arrogantly as in the year 1598, when the queen consulted with three or four counsellors about sending a superintendant of the affairs of Ireland into that kingdom. The queen had thoughts of Sir William Knowles,

uncle to Essex, but he as strenuously stood up for Sir George Carew; but with this the queen would not comply, when he, in a contemptuous manner, turned his back upon her, which she immediately resented by hitting him a box on the ear. The Earl now laid his hand upon his sword, but the others interposing, he was obliged to retreat. Essex afterwards made submission, and was again received into favour.

At this time the rebellion in Ireland was grown to a great height, and the lord-deputy being dead, several were proposed to be sent thither, when Essex hinted he should be glad of that command, to which the queen consented. He accordingly went with a large army, and an unlimited general commission, and soon appointed the Earl of Southampton as acting general.

The intention of the government was, that Tir-Owen, the most formidable of the rebels, should be immediately attacked; but the whole summer was spent in the pursuit of some rebels of little note. This conduct obliged the queen to send him some very sharp letters, which he highly resented. At length he ordered the army to march against Tir-Owen; but instead of coming to a battle, he held a private parley with that rebel, and concluded a truce with him for six weeks, renewable at the end of that time for six weeks more,—and so on. But finding his conduct disliked in England, he hastened thither, leaving Ireland without orders; upon which he was put into custody at the lord-keeper's house. After six months' confinement, he was suffered to go to his own

house. The queen now proceeded against him, but would not suffer him to be impeached in the star-chamber, lest they shouly accuse him of high treason, or fine him considerably. She appointed a select commission to try him at the lord-keeper's, where, after a long hearing, they determined he should lose his places, and remain in confinement during the queen's pleasure. Had his behaviour, during his confinement, answered the mildness with which he was treated, he no doubt would soon have been restored to favour; but he was too hot-headed, and those about him gave him wrong counsel: they told him the ministers were his enemies, and since he could not remove them by fair means, he ought to endeavour to do so by force.

Essex and his colleagues now formed a design of seizing upon the palace, and in it the queen and her counsel, and also upon the Tower and the city of London; but being suspected, he was summoned before the council, and refused to appear, under a pretence of indisposition.

Finding his measures entirely frustrated, on the 8th of February 1600, being Sunday, and early in the morning, he had got some noblemen and about three hundred gentlemen with him. The news of this being brought to the queen, she sent the lord keeper, with three more of the council, to learn the meaning of so tumultuous a convention; but, instead of answering them, he put them into custody till he could get into the city, expecting to find every body there ready to join him; but in this he was entirely deceived, as not one per-

son would take up arms. He was now proclaimed a traitor, and a party of the queen's troops meeting him near St. Paul's, there was a skirmish, in which some few were killed, and Essex was obliged to retreat by water. He went to his own house, which he fortified in some measure, but in vain. The great ordnance was brought against him, and, after a short defence, in which some lives were lost, he surrendered. He was brought to trial, along with Southampton, before his peers, impeached of high treason, convicted, and condemned. Southampton was saved; but Essex, on the 25th, (being Ash-Wednesday,) was privately executed in the Tower.

Some writers have asserted, that, of all the queen's paramours, Essex was her greatest favourite: that, on a certain occasion, she presented him with a diamond ring, as a token of her love and esteem, and told him, that if at any time he should be placed in difficult circumstances, on sending her this ring, she would do her utmost to relieve him. But, unfortunately for him, in the time of his greatest need, he possessed not this token of her affection,—a beautiful lady of quality, whom he loved more than the queen, having previously got it from him.

Some time after the death of Essex, the queen was informed of the lady who had the ring; when she hastened to her house, where she found her in bed, in a dying state, and dragged her from thence on to the floor by the hair of the head, uttering bitter reflections and imprecations on her for her conduct.

The queen never completely recovered her

former cheerfulness after this affair, but was more retired, and less attentive to public business. Her spirits became more and more depressed, till the spring of 1603, when death put a period to her sufferings.

The Ballad.

ALL you that cry O hone! O hone!
Come now and sing O hone with me;
For why—our jewel is from us gone,
The valiant Knight of Chivalry.

Of rich and poor belov'd was he,
In time an honourable knight,
When by our laws condemn'd to die,
He lately took his last good night.

Count him not like to Champion,
Those traitorous men of Babington,
Nor like the Earl of Westmoreland,
By whom a number were undone:

He never yet hurt mother's son,
His quarrel still maintain'd the right;
The salt, salt tears my face run down,
When I think on his last good night.

The Portugals can witness be,
His dagger at Lisbon gate he flung,
And, like a Knight of Chivalry,
His chain upon the gates he hung.

I would to God that he would come,
To fetch them back in order right,
Which thing was by his honour done,
Yet lately took his last good night.

The Frenchmen they can testify
The town of Gournay he took in,
And march'd to Rome immediately,
Not caring for his foes a pin:

With bullets then he pierc'd their skin,
And made them fly before his sight;
He then that time did credit win,
And now hath ta'en his last good night.

Would God he ne'er had Ireland known,
Nor set one foot on Flanders ground,
Then might we well enjoy our own,—
But, oh! our jewel can not be found;

Which makes our trickling tears abound,
Washing our cheeks,—a mournful sight;
Still, still his name in our ears doth sound,
But now he's ta'en his last good night.

DAFT WATTY'S

Ramble to Carlisle.

IF you axe me where I come frae, I say the fell syde,
Where fadder and mudder, and honest fwok beyde,
And my sweetheart—O bless her! she thought nyen like me,
When she shuik hands the tears gush'd frae her e'e.
Says I, "I mun e'en get a spot if I can,
But whatever betide me, I'll think o' thee, Nan!"

Nan was a perfect beauty, wi' twee cheeks like codlin blossoms; the verra feet on her made my mouth a' water. "Fares-te-weel, Watty!" says she, "tou's a wag amang lasses, and I'll see thee nae mair."—"Nay, dunnet gowl, Nan," says I—

"For mappen, or lang, I'se be maister mysel;"
Sae we buss'd, and I tuik a last luik at the fell.

On I whussl'd & wander'd: my bundle I flung
O'er my shoulder, when Cowley he efter me sprung,

An' howl'd, silly fellow! an' fawn'dat my fit,
As if to say—Watty, we munnet part yet!
At Carel I stuid, wi' a strae i' my mouth,
And they tuik me, nae doubt, for a promisin' youth;—

The weyves com round me in clusters —"What weage dus te ax, canny lad?" says yen. "Wey, three pun and a crown; wunnet beate a hair o' my beard." "What can te dui?" says anudder. "Dui! wey, I cun plough, sow, mow, shear, thresh, dike, milk, kurn, muck a byer, sing a psalm, mend car-gear, dance a whorn-pype, nick a nag's tail, hunt a brock, or feight iver a yen o' my weight in aw Croglin parish."

An auld bearded hussy suin caw'd me her man;
But that day, I may say't, aw my sorrows began.

Furst, Cowley, peur fellow! they hang'd i' the street,
And skinn'd, G—d forgie them! for shoon to their feet;
I cried, and they caw'd me peur half-witted clown,
And banter'd and follow'd me all up and down:
Neist my deam she e'en starv'd me, that ever liv'd weel,—
Her hard words and luiks wad hae freeten'd the de'il.

She had a lang beard, for aw t'warl' like a billy goat, wi' a kiln-dried frosty face; and then the smawest leg o' mutton in a' Carel market served the cat, me, and her for a week. The bairns meade sec gam on us, and thundered at the rapper as if to waken a corp; when I opened the duir, they threw stour i' my e'en, and caw'd me daft Watty—

Sae I pack'd up my duds when my quarter was out,
And, wi' weage i' my pocket, I saunter'd about.

Suin my reet han' breek pocket they pick'd in a fray,
And wi' fyfteen white shillings they slipp'd clean away,
Forbye my twee letters com' frae mudder an' Nan,
Where they said Carel lasses wad Watty trapan;
But 'twad take a lang day just to tell what I saw,
How I 'scap'd frae the gallows, the swodgers and aw.

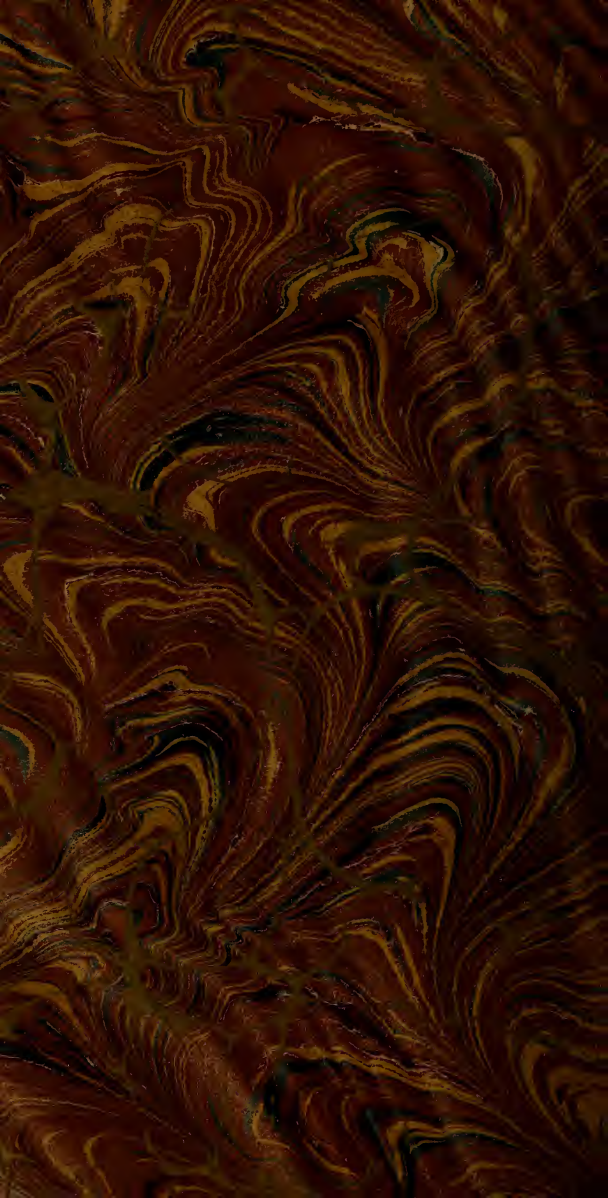
Ay, there were some forgery chaps bid me just sign my neame. "Nay," says I, "you've getten a wrang pig by the lug, for I canna write!" Then a fellow like a lobster, a' leaced an' feathered, ax't me, "Watty, wull te list? thou's

either be a general or gomeral." "Nay, I winnet, that's plain; I'se content wi' a cwot o' mudder's spinnin."

Now, wi' twee groats and tuppence, I'll e'en toddle heame,
But ne'er be a swodger while Watty's my neame.

Now my mudder 'll gowl, and my fadder 'll stare,
When I tell them poor Cowley they'll never see mair;
Then they 'il bring me a stuil,—as for Nan, she 'll be fain
To see I'm return'd to my friends yence again;
The barn and the byer, and the auld hollow tree,
Will just seem like cronies yen's fidgin to see;

The sheep 'll nit ken Watty's voice now! The peat-stack we used to lake round 'll be burnt ere this! As for Nan, she'll be owther married or broken-hearted! An' aw be weel at Croglin, we'll hae sic fiddlin', dancin', drinkin', singin' an' smeukin', till aw's blue about us—

Amang aw our neybors sec wonders I'll tell,
And never mair leave my auld friends or the fell.

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